

Now, I'm told, I don't know this for a fact.

Mr. OBEY. Will the gentleman yield? Mr. BARTON of Texas. Sure, I'll yield.

Mr. OBEY. The gentleman has complimented me for the way we have handled appropriations bills.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. And that's a sincere compliment.

Mr. OBEY. I appreciate the compliment. But let me suggest that I would appreciate it, if we have conducted ourselves the way the gentleman thinks we should, then I would appreciate that he would not visit his frustrations on other legislation on the appropriations process when we have produced bills in what you readily admit is the correct fashion. If you have an argument in your own bailiwick, it would be nice if you kept it there so that the House might get its work done.

Mr. BARTON of Texas. I appreciate that gentleman's comment. But my response to the distinguished chairman of the full Appropriations Committee is, you've got to pick up your buckets where you stand. And this is our only forum.

I'm told that the Rules Committee is going to meet at midnight or 1 a.m. this morning to consider a same-day rule for SCHIP. Now, keep in mind, last Tuesday night at 11:36 p.m., after the House is through with its last vote of the day, we get a 465-page SCHIP bill that hasn't had any hearings on it, that hasn't had any witnesses on, that hasn't had a draft circulated. And now the Rules Committee is going to meet at midnight allegedly, or 1 o'clock this morning, to consider a same-day rule to consider that bill tomorrow.

So I respect Mr. OBEY and I respect Subcommittee Chairman DELAUNO for doing the process the right way. But our only recourse, unfortunately, under the rules is to come out on this floor under the open rule to strike the requisite number of words to speak on the ag appropriation bill and then talk about the travesty that may be hoisted on the American public tomorrow in which a \$227 billion cut in Medicare over the next 10 years is going to be voted on, with not one witness testifying in favor or opposition, not one draft that's been circulated, not any process at all.

So I support the McHenry amendment, and I also support an open process on the largest health care issue that's going to be before this Congress this year.

We should not have the Rules Committee vote tonight at midnight to bring a same-day rule. We ought to send the SCHIP bills back to the committee, have a normal process, and then bring them to the floor later this fall where we could have an open debate in the full House.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back.

Mr. CULBERSON. I move to strike the last word.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Texas is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. CULBERSON. Mr. Chairman, I also rise in support of Mr. McHENRY's amendment, but I also want to thank my ranking member, the subcommittee chairman here. I serve on the Appropriations Committee, and Chairman OBEY is correct: the committee has done a good job of making sure we had bills in front of us and opportunity for debate.

But I also want to reiterate Mr. BARTON's point. He is absolutely right. The reason we're out here today and having this discussion is because we, each one of us, as Members of Congress have really a fiduciary, very deep and profound fiduciary responsibility to be good stewards of the taxpayers' dollars. And we're here debating an appropriations bill on how to spend those tax dollars. And the Agriculture Department has, an important part of its role is the taking, they have a role directly, for example, in the Texas Medical Center. And the nexus to this debate, Mr. Chairman, that I would certainly point out is, under this bill, the Department of Agriculture, for example, helps maintain the children's nutrition program at the Baylor College of Medicine, which I'm proud to represent.

The Agriculture Department, a key part of their responsibility is children's health. And it is highly relevant to talk about this Children's Health Insurance Program that the Democrat majority is attempting to shove through this Congress with very little debate, very little sunlight, which is always a dangerous sign. If they won't let you read the bill and they won't let you talk about it, it is sure going to contain serious problems. And I for one am deeply concerned about the tremendous expansion this bill proposes. The bill will, it is clear from what we have seen, take seniors off of Medicare and allow States to put illegal aliens on Medicare. The bill has no reasonable limits. The bill has no enforceable limits on age. The bill has no enforceable limits on income requirements. And the bill is also silent as to whether or not States can include illegal aliens in coverage. The bill will allow States to provide Medicare coverage at Federal taxpayers' expense to anyone the State chooses to cover.

Now, imagine what that means in the State of California where the Governor has already advocated and the legislature has advocated providing health care coverage to illegal aliens. And I say that in the context, ladies and gentlemen, of the fact that all of us need to remember, every bill, every dollar we spend, that the Government Accountability Office has already calculated that in order to pay for the obligations of the Federal Government today, my overriding concern is that, in order to pay for the existing obligations of the Federal Government, the GAO has calculated, Mr. FARR, that each American would have to buy \$155,000 worth of Treasury bills. That's how massive the existing obligations of the Federal Government are.

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The existing obligations of the Federal Government are so massive that every living American would have to purchase \$155,000 worth of Treasury bills, and that wouldn't even touch the national debt. That wouldn't even touch the interest on the national debt. And yet the Democrat majority has attempted to jam through a bill here that we don't even really know the ultimate cost.

Mr. BARTON estimates that if the States expand coverage as far as they could to pick up illegal aliens and people of any age group or income group, but if Mr. BARTON is correct, and I think it is reasonable that there is no real way to calculate how much this bill costs, we are adding a monstrous and inexcusable financial debt on the back backs of our children.

You are taking away Medicare coverage from seniors and allowing States to give it to illegal aliens. This is outrageous, it is unacceptable, it is unaffordable, and you are going to break the back of the taxpayers of this country.

And I, for one, will stand at this microphone and all of us have an obligation to stand up here like Horatio at the gates of Rome. If this is the only place that I can stand and fight, I will stand and fight here as long as it takes to protect the Treasury and the taxpayers of this country from irresponsible, irresolute spendthrift practices of the majority of this House, and I won't stand for it.

Mr. Chairman, I yield back the balance of my time.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Chairman, I move to strike the requisite number of words.

The CHAIRMAN. The gentleman from Michigan is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. DINGELL. Mr. Chairman, I rise with considerable regret, and I want to speak with affection and respect for my good friend and colleague from Texas (Mr. BARTON), the senior member of the Republicans on the Committee on Energy and Commerce. He complained about the process in the Committee on Energy and Commerce.

I would like the House and this committee to know that he was afforded, first of all, every bit of notice that is required by the rules of the House, that the proceedings which were conducted in that committee were conducted in an eminently fair and proper way in full accord with the rules and the proprieties of the House.

I would also like him to know that I am sure he can recall that we sought his counsel as to how it was we could put something together which, in fact, would give him a process which would enable us to address the problem of SCHIP.

I would like to remind him and this committee that SCHIP is going to expire on the 30th of September. That is an important date because at which time we are going to find that all of